

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated June 15, 2006, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on September 15, 2006. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-3, 7-13, and 17-36 remain pending in the application and stand rejected by the Examiner. Applicant proposes cancelling claims 1-3, 7-13, 17-26, and 31-32 as shown above. Reconsideration of rejected claims 27-30 and 33-36 is respectfully requested for reasons presented below.

Claims 1-3, 7-13, and 17-36 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicants are invited to clarify the correct interpretation of "actuating" a substrate support. Applicants are also invited to clarify the correct interpretation of "project" a first set of lift pins. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicant has canceled all claims that use the term "actuating". Claims 27-30 and 33-36 do not recite "actuating" and thus stand rejected for reciting "project". Thus, rejection of claims 27-30 and 33-36 is respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully submits that "project" has the standard meaning of "to cause to protrude" as supported by the specification (*see*, attached page 920 of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1976). Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 7-13, and 17-36 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over *Harashima et al.* (US Patent No. 5,677,824) in view of *White et al.* (US 5,352,294). Claims 1-3, 7-13, 17-26, and 31-32 have been cancelled in this response. Applicant traverses rejection of claims 27-30 and 33-36.

Harashima et al. discloses a plurality of release pins 1 and lift pins 9 independently controlled by a plurality of drive mechanisms 2 and an elevation mechanism 8 in order to release a wafer 10 above a substrate support stage 5. The release pins 1 are projected only to lift the wafer stepwise by 0.1 mm at a time for a

maximum of 0.5 mm. Thus, the release pins 1 of *Harashima et al.* located near the peripheral portion of the wafer 10 can not be projected to lift the wafer 10 to a transfer position.

White et al. teaches a first set of centering pins 12 and a second set of support pins 200. Both sets of pins of *White et al.* are located near the perimeter of the substrate 108 and both sets of pins are projected together a fixed distance above the surface of the substrate support 113.

Harashima et al., in view of *White et al.*, alone or in combination, does not teach, show or suggest projecting one set of lift pins to lift a perimeter of the substrate a first distance above a surface of a substrate support and then to lift the substrate to a transfer position, in addition to projecting another set of lift pins positioned radially inwards to lift a center portion of the substrate.

Accordingly, *Harashima et al.*, in view of *White et al.*, alone or in combination, does not teach, show, or suggest projecting a first set of lift pins to lift a perimeter of the substrate a first distance above a surface of a substrate support, projecting a second set of lift pins to lift a center portion of the substrate, the second set of lift pins positioned radially inwards of the first set of lift pins, and then projecting the first set of lift pins to lift the substrate to a transfer position, as recited in claim 27 and claims 28-30 dependent thereon.

Furthermore, *Harashima et al.* in view of *White et al.*, alone or in combination, does not teach, show, or suggest contacting a plurality of a first set of lift pins by a surface prior to contacting a second set of lift pins by the surface to lift a perimeter of the substrate with the first set of lift pins and a center portion of the substrate with the second set of lift pins, projecting the first set of lift pins a first distance above a surface of a substrate support and, and projecting the second set of lift pins a second distance less than the first distance above the surface of the substrate support, as recited in claim 33 and claims 34-36 dependent thereon.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show, or suggest the invention as claimed in pending claims 27-30 and 33-36. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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